Film History, Volume 24, pp. 260–280, 2012. Copyright © 2012 Indiana University Press
ISSN: 0892-2160. Printed in United States of America

Nelson Edwards and the Newsreels: An American Life

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Nelson Edwards is sometimes mentioned in the history books, merely in a footnote, as the man whom the pro-German William Randolph Hearst sent to Germany in 1916 to cover the German side of the Great War. But he was more than that. Edwards was one of the best-known photographers in the pioneer days of newsreels. He worked for Hearst before and during World War I, was briefly head cameraman for Fox newsreels, worked as a stringer for Paramount Newsreels in his later years, and witnessed, and indeed participated in, many of the major historical events of the period.[1]

Nelson Elisha Edwards was born in Point Pleasant, Mason County, West Virginia on 25 November 1887 to Jake C. and Margaret Edwards. The Edwards' had been farmers in West Virginia, but when Nelson was only six months old they pulled up stakes and moved to Plevna, Reno County, Kansas, by covered wagon, a journey that took between two and three and a half months, depending on different versions. Edwards later reported, "They tell me they let me fall out of the wagon once on the way. They say the wheels missed me by only an inch."

They settled into what Edwards called "a hole in the ground". The original Edwards home was a classic Kansas dugout built right into the sod. Farming in Kansas could be tough, and it broke a lot of families, but because of the recent introduction of Turkey Red wheat, introduced from Russia by the Mennonites, Kansas was already being celebrated as the Wheat State. Perhaps Jake Edwards had been persuaded to move to Kansas by reports of the money to be made in wheat. In any case, the family appears to have done well. By 1915, photographs of the Edwards property show a solid, prosperous house and farm. Jake Edwards served twice as a member of the Kansas State House of Representatives, in 1915 and 1917. He also was appointed county chairman. The Edwards' had nine sons and one daughter: Preston Edwards, Nelson Edwards, Cecil Edwards, Clarence Edwards, Roy Edwards, Hobart Edwards, E.K. Edwards, Morry Edwards (who died in infancy), Naomi Edwards, and Curry Edwards. As we shall see, some of Nelson's brothers would also become newsreel cameramen.

Nelson was a tall, muscular man with prominent cheekbones, a hawk nose, lighthouse eyes peering out at the world from under heavy eyebrows, and thick, dark hair which photographed jet black. He tended to look short in his photographs because he was so stocky, but he was quite large. He was athletic, enjoyed sports, including boxing, wrestling and hunting, and was, as his son-in law put it, a "man's man". Even ninety years later his face, staring up from old photographs, is compelling. He was never without a sense of humor, but he also looked like he could make things go his way, and Edwards did exactly that.

Farming for subsistence in the early part of the twentieth century seems to have impelled a lot of young men to get as far away from it as possible. As an escape route, Edwards first tried business school at Iola, Kansas in August 1907, but it did not take. As he later said, "I had a strong desire to become one

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of those long-haired artists and starve to death in a French garret. Instead, I only starved, so, when I found a photographer who was eating, I left school and went to work with him".[2]

The photographer with whom he worked was apparently Richard E. Gleave, in Kansas City, but there was reluctance among photographers to teach others their craft, and evidently Edwards did not learn much.[3] Edwards left Kansas and went to New Orleans to learn photography in 1908.[4] With whom he apprenticed is not known, but he evidently did learn retouching, either in Kansas City or New Orleans. In a brief autobiographical sketch that he later wrote, he noted that it was a chance retouching job that led him into photography.[5] From New Orleans, Edwards took a tramp steamer to New York, and by 1910 Edwards was in Newark, New Jersey. According to his family, he worked for a man known as "Bucky Walter", who was probably the celebrated photographer Floyd A. Walter. Walter's photography studio was located at 607 Broad Street in Newark in 1911, and for a while Edwards was getting his mail at the same address.[6] Edwards also had charge of the studio at Hahne & Co., Newark's largest department store, at 625–630 Broad Street. It was during this period that he met his future wife, Cornelia Fisk, then twelve years old, whose sister Mariette was married to Walter. The Fisk family is a great story in its own right. Enthusiastic photographers all, they had settled in Philipsburg, New Jersey and shuttled from there across the Delaware River to Easton, Pennsylvania. Cornelia knew her way around a darkroom, and Mariette in later years listed her profession as photographer.[7]

First newsreel pictures

In 1912 he was working as a still photographer in New York for E. B. (Eddie) Hatrick, chief of photo syndication for the International News Service (I.N.S.), and so Edwards was now indirectly part of the empire of the colossal and controversial William Randolph Hearst, newspaper magnate, yellow journalist, one of the richest and most influential men in America, and a man who was soon to have major moving picture interests. I.N.S. was originally the wire and syndication service that Hearst had established to control and sell his feature and syndicated material. It also included the photographs and later the newsreels that Hearst produced. Hatrick at this point was in charge only of photography, since Hearst had not yet moved into newsreels, but Hatrick and Edwards were already experimenting with a moving picture

Fig. 1. Nelson Edwards with Hearst star Grace Darling, probably in San Francisco during the Panama-Pacific Exposition.

[All illustrations courtesy of the Wiegman family.]

camera, and selling the results to Pathé News.[8] Because of their news sense, Hatrick specifically selected still photographers like Edwards and had them trained for this job. He also had moving pictures shot at Woodrow Wilson's first inauguration in March of 1913, and sold the results to Harry Warner (of future Warner Bros. fame), who got the pictures into theaters the day after the inauguration. Since Edwards mentions having filmed the inauguration, he at least probably had a hand in the filming.[9] Warner paid I.N.S. $2,000.00 for the newsreel. Thus Hatrick was able to demonstrate to Hearst that money could be made in the newsreel business. Hearst authorized Hatrick to negotiate with Colonel William Selig in Chicago to produce a Hearst-Selig newsreel. The *Hearst-Selig News Pictorial* came into being on 28 February 1914.[10]

According to Edwards, his first major cinematographic assignment for Hearst was to cover the Mexican revolution in 1914. After the revolution had deposed the dictator Porfirio Diaz, Francisco Madero assumed the presidency and was acclaimed by

Fig. 2. Edwards suspended over New York, filming the new Western Union Building at Broadway and Fulton Street in 1915.

huge crowds in Mexico City. It appeared that the revolution was over. But General Victoriano Huerta assumed dictatorial powers shortly afterward, and had Madero killed on 22 February 1913. The newly elected president Woodrow Wilson despised Huerta, refused to recognize him, and then recalled the American ambassador, which brought things to a head. As Kevin Brownlow put it: "Now began 'Carranza's rebellion', the struggle between isolated rebel commanders – Carranza, Villa, Zapata, Obregon – and Huerta's Federal Army. And it was during this period that Pancho Villa began his unlikely connection with motion pictures."[11]

This is the moment when Edwards started filming in Mexico. While Hearst, after his ranch was seized and five employees were murdered, later became strongly anti-revolutionary and wanted American intervention in Mexico, he was relatively non-bellicose in 1914. The newsreel coverage appears to have been even-handed. On 18 July 1914, the *Motion Picture News* noted that in *Hearst-Selig News Pictorial* No. 35, "Mexican news has started to come to the front again". In No. 42 (23 July), "General Villa receives the greatest honor among celebrities through the camera-man in this week's pictorial. He is caught before Torreon while his followers accord him the acclaim of a hero. Other scenes with the rebel army in Mexico give this issue more than ordinary timeliness." A safe conduct dated 2 August 1914 by Carranza's Constitutional Party gave Edwards permission to travel to Saltillo in the state of Coahuila.[12] On 15 September 1914, the *Motion Picture News* resumed its comments on the Hearst-Selig films from Mexico. In No. 50 (20 August): "we have almost forgotten poor little Mexico and her troubles in the absorption of the great European war. This review reminds us that important events in the history of that country are still going on by showing us General Carranza's entrance into the capitol, and the assumption of the government by the Constitutionalists." In No. 54 (3 September): "Mexico, although she has been chased from the front page of the newspapers, is still alive in this week's films. The transfer of the government to the Constitutionalists in Mexico City forms the news from that section of the world." In No. 56 (10 September): "General Carranza, now provisional president of Mexico, enters the capitol". I.N.S. had previously sent reporter Ansel Earle (A. E.) Wallace and ace photographer Ariel Varges to Mexico, and some of these features could have been shot by Wallace or Varges, but there seems little doubt that a lot of them were shot by Edwards. Edwards claimed to have filmed Villa, and there are pictures of Carranza's entry into Mexico City in Edwards's scrap book. In addition, Varges was probably not on the scene by then, since Hearst recalled Varges and sent him to Europe shortly after the outbreak of war. Wallace was shooting the opening of the Panama Canal on 8 August aboard the S. S. *Ancon*.[13]

After Mexico, Edwards settled at 401 Beech Street, Arlington, New Jersey, a suburb of Newark, which presumably allowed him to commute to New York. At some point, Edwards was sent to Canada to photograph the Canadian troops leaving for the war.[14] He got increasingly big stories. Edwards shot the story of Thomas Edison's sixty-eighth birthday in Orange, New Jersey that appeared in *Hearst-Selig News Pictorial* No. 15, 22 February 1915.[15] Perhaps the first time that Edwards really achieved prominence was due to a part stunt/part story that also produced a famous photograph. In March 1915, Edwards and Charles L. Mathieu, another I.N.S. cameraman, were assigned to make photographs and films of the new Western Union Building in New York at Broadway and Fulton Street five hundred feet in the air "while clinging like monkeys to dangling ropes and clutching slippery beam supports".

Edwards said later that his only thought besides making sure that the shutter snapped was that humanity certainly looked insignificant from great heights. The story ran in *Hearst-Selig News Pictorial* No. 22, 22 March 1915.[16] Somewhat later, Edwards was assigned to cover the Standard Oil strike at Bayonne, New Jersey, producing footage that even-

tually appeared in *Hearst –Selig News Pictorial* No. 60, July 1915. He wrote:

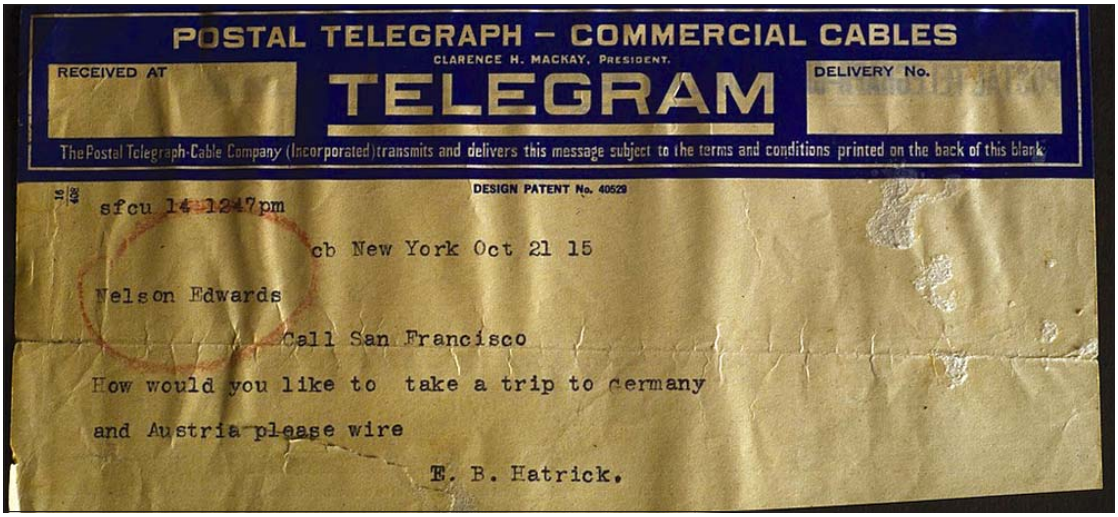
> When I went to Mexico to cover the operations of Pancho Villa, I expected to be shot at on more than one occasion. But there didn't a bullet come near me. [sic] I was never safer in my life.
>
> When I went to Bayonne, N.J. to cover a strike at the works of the Standard Oil Co., I expected to find plenty of husky cops on the job and no danger at all. But there weren't any cops, or, if there were, they remained discreetly out of sight, and I was shot at not once but several score of times, stopped several bricks, was missed by some few hundred other bricks, was chased four blocks by an enraged mob bent on murder and was punched in the right eye by an extremely powerful person – oh, extremely powerful person!
>
> This just goes to show that you never can tell what you are going up against when you start forth with the old camera and tripod.
>
> I approached the works of the Standard Oil Co. with due caution. I had been warned by other photographers that it was dangerous work. Guards and deputy sheriffs armed with Winchester rifles were posted behind a barricade at the end of a short street which led to the main entrance to the grounds surrounding the plant. Every once in a while the mob would rush down this street until some of the more daring got close to the barricades, where the deputies could not hit them, and then would fire over the rail with revolvers and also hurl bricks.
>
> Such a battle was in progress, and I sought an elevation from which to work. I was just setting up my camera when I heard a roar of hundreds of angry voices, and a man circled the corner. He was hatless, gasping for breath, terror-stricken and breaking all track records. In one hand he clutched tightly a still camera. He saw me, and without stopping, shouted:
>
> 'Beat it! They're after me. They want to lynch me!'
>
> He kept right on going. Also, I got into action myself. I knew I couldn't run with my heavy camera and tripod, so I took a chance on hiding in a doorway. And I ducked out sight just in time. The next second the mob passed. Many of them had armfuls of bricks, which they hurled at the fleeing photographer.
>
> I gathered that photographers were unpopular around there. And I was right. The rioters feared that the authorities would use the photographs as evidence on which to prosecute. Consequently the mob sought to drive photographers away. Nevertheless, I think I got some remarkable moving pictures of rioting and shooting. It was the real thing in the way of excitement. I'm afraid the pictures may be a little unsteady. I know my hand was when I cranked.[17]

Fig. 3. Edwards, with heavy police protection, filming the Standard Oil strike of 1915.

Edwards did not stay long in New Jersey. There was a tie-in between the Selig studio and the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco.[18] Hearst-Selig News Pictorials featured exhaustive coverage of the Exposition, and Edwards was needed to help film it. He left for California, probably in August 1915. What stories Edwards photographed in San Francisco are unknown. Figure 1 (above) shows a photograph of Edwards with Grace Darling, an ex-reporter and actress who starred in the Hearst-produced serial *Beatrice Fairfax* in 1916, and who acted as a sort of host, guide and interviewer to the Exposition in the Hearst-Selig newsreels. He was also acting as a stills photographer for the San Francisco *Call and Post*.[19]

Cameraman behind the German Lines

The World War had started in August of 1914. As is too well known to need detail here, Hearst was pro-



POSTAL TELEGRAPH – COMMERCIAL CABLES

CLARENCE H. MACKAY, PRESIDENT.

RECEIVED AT

TELEGRAM

DELIVERY No.

The Postal Telegraph-Cable Company (Incorporated) transmits and delivers this message subject to the terms and conditions printed on the back of this blank

DESIGN PATENT No. 40529

sfcu 14 1247pm

cb New York Oct 21 15

Nelson Edwards

Call San Francisco

How would you like to take a trip to Germany

and Austria please wire

E. B. Hatrick.

Fig. 4. Telegram from Eddie Hatrick of Hearst's International News Service, inviting Edwards to war-torn Europe.

German and extremely anti-British. He had been interested in having a man in Germany to make newsreels for quite some time. At the beginning of the war he had been ably represented in Germany by Ansel Earle Wallace, but Wallace had left Germany, apparently in February 1915.[20] Meanwhile, Germany for quite some time had been interested in showing the German side of the war to the Americans, especially to counteract the growing anti-German sentiment in America, and indeed several Americans were already filming in Germany in the summer of 1915.[21] So Hearst and Hatrick arranged for another Hearst representative to film in Germany. According to most sources, in December 1915 Hearst wrote a personal note to Count von Bernstorff, Ambassador to the United States, asking for his help on the matter, since the two men had met socially and got on.[22] However, the 15 December date may be muddled, or Bernstorff was smart enough independently to realize that an American cameraman representing Hearst interests in Germany would be a very good idea. So long before December, the machinery that would send Edwards to Europe was already well in motion. On 21 October 1915, Edwards, still in San Francisco, received a terse, yet enticing, telegram, inviting him "to take a trip to Germany and Austria".[23]

It may be assumed that Edwards would like it very much. He immediately started making preparations to leave and applied for a passport. On 4 November 1915, von Bernstorff had already granted Edwards permission to represent the *New York American* (the Hearst flagship newspaper) and the International Film Service, again making the personal note in December from Hearst to von Bernstorff unnecessary.[24] According to a newspaper (no title or date), Edwards "of 401 Beach Street, Arlington" [New Jersey] returned "last Friday" from the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco:

> The Arlington man possesses a letter of introduction from Count von Bernstorff, the German Ambassador in Washington. He also has passports, he says, entitling him to go to the Galician front and to travel throughout Germany and Austria, from where he will advance into Serbia, if possible. He will sail on the Rijndam of the Holland-American line.[25]

But there was a change of plan. That fall, Henry Ford decided to send a "peace ship" to Europe, with a large number of prominent pacifists aboard, to establish a permanent commission in The Hague and create a permanent committee there to persuade the combatants to stop the World War. In principle it was not a bad idea, but the whole enterprise received the greatest amount of ridicule from its inception. The idea was also neither aided by Ford's general ineptness nor by bickering among the peace delegates. Ford could not persuade most of the really important people he wanted for the trip to accompany him, probably because they smelled failure. But Ford did decide to have a large number of reporters, correspondents and photographers to accompany the mission. On 1 December 1915, Hatrick telegraphed Louis P. Lochner, then secretary for Henry Ford, asking that Edwards be the representative for the I.N.S. on the Ford peace ship leaving for Europe.[26] This was evidently agreeable, and Ed-

wards was sent out by the I.N.S. on the *Prinz Oscar II*, which set sail from Hoboken on 4 December 1915. Louis Lochner said that there were three cinematographers on board the ship, but there seem to have been four. The other photographer listed on board was Joseph T. Rucker, who was also an expert.[27] A newsreel cameraman for Universal, he had covered the opening of the Panama Canal in 1915, and was to get an Academy Award for cinematography in 1930. Berndt G. Phillips was also aboard but not too much is known about him except that he was a stills photographer working for the press in New York. The three were the subject of a poem in a photography magazine:

> Rucker, Edwards and Phillips
> Sailed to end the War,
> On Oscar the Second,
> With a few dozen more.[28]

The fourth cinematographer was Lawrence J. Darmour, a cameraman for Mutual. He had started as a cameraman for Gaumont, but Pell Mitchell, the head of newsreels at Mutual, had gotten him aboard as what must have been a last minute addition. His passport was only issued on 3 December 1915, the day before sailing. He had photographed the Standard Oil strike along with Edwards.[29] On 8 December 1915 the expedition set up what now would be called a "photo op". The *Argosy*, the Expedition's ship's newspaper, reported that same day:

> OUR PLACE IN THE SUN
>
> The activities on deck this morning included taking moving pictures. The presentation of the flag from Philadelphia was duplicated, Mrs. [Joseph] Fels presenting it to Mr. Ford. After that Mr. Ford and office force of about 25 were photographed. Later Mr. Ford was taken standing at the wheel.[30]

Edwards stayed with the ship as far as Christiana, Norway. Since the Ford Party had decided to travel from Christiana into Germany (via Copenhagen across Denmark), and Germany had an absolute ban on bringing cameras into Germany,[31] Edwards left the Peace Party and made his way via Stockholm and Copenhagen to Rotterdam.[32]

From Rotterdam, he made it to The Hague, but did not stay there long. By this time he had received permission to enter Germany along with his camera. The trip on the Peace Ship was not a waste. *Hearst-Vitagraph News Pictorial* No. 1 featured Ford's ship in its very first issue, and Edwards's coverage included the extremely dignified and prominent ministers Charles F. Aked and Dr. Lloyd Jenkin Jones playing leapfrog on deck. The footage received hearty laughter when projected.[33]

As with several other American news photographers before him, once Edwards was in Germany the Germans did not seem to know what to do with him. The Germans displayed a reluctance to send American cinematographers to the real hot spots. While Edwards was in Germany, the bloodbath at Verdun was at its height, and the battle of the Somme started on 1 July, but Edwards was never sent to either place. According to his later recollections, he did see some combat, however, in spite of German restrictions. On one occasion, the special car in which he was being conducted along the Western Front ran into heavy French artillery fire along a half-mile stretch of exposed highway. Edwards and a German officer lay on the back seat, across each other. When they sat back up, they found that the shellfire had torn to shreds the back of the seat where their heads would have been. Another time, Edwards visited the front and attracted a crowd of German soldiers, who in turn attracted French shellfire. An officer told the men to take cover. "He hadn't more than got that out of his mouth when I heard those things whistling", Edwards said later. "I left my camera there and ran for a dugout because when I see those things clipping the limbs off of trees I'm out in front." The shells felled some trees and killed some Germans.[34] In March, after a very brief stint in Berlin and environs photographing the obligatory prison camps, he was sent to cover Turkey, Germany's friend and ally.

The Turk and the Teuton

In the latter part of 1915, Field Marshal August von Mackensen, commanding a force named Army Group Mackensen comprised of Germans, Austrians and the Bulgarian First Army, had attacked Serbia in a campaign called the Second Invasion of Serbia. It was a great success for the Central Powers, and Belgrade fell on 9 October 1915. The Serbs' only rail connection to the Allies at Salonika was also cut off, and the Serbs had no choice but to admit defeat and retreat to the Adriatic coast. The Bulgarians captured the section of the famed Berlin-Baghdad Railway, one of the Kaiser's pet projects before the war, which

Fig. 5. Edwards's photograph of Turkish artillery, 1916.

had been in the hands of the Serbians, thus re-opening the railroad from Berlin to Constantinople. On 1 July 1916 *Billboard* reported:

> Nelson G. [sic] Edwards, staff camera man of the Hearst International News Pictorial with the Turkish Army at Constantinople is responsible for a number of remarkable photographs showing Turkish infantry in the field.
>
> When Turkey entered the Great War the "Sick Man of Europe" was not taken seriously by any of the students of the conflict. Turkey was supposed to be hopelessly corrupt and ravaged by traitorous and grafting political profiteers, for which the Far East is notorious. Its army, brave enough as a whole, was sadly disorganized and poorly equipped. Then came Liman von Sanders, Teuton, and reorganized the half-hearted and dissatisfied fighting force. With the assistance of German officers, German equipment and German efficiency methods he accomplished the impossible, and from a horde of disgruntled renegades made the Ottoman forces a powerful and efficient unit, as witness the defense of the Dardanelles. The failure of the allies at Gallipoli it was that led Nelson G. [sic] Edwards, staff camera man for the Hearst International News Pictorial, with the armies of the Kaiser, to Constantinople and the Turkish Battle Fronts in Persia. [35]

The *Billboard* article, obviously written by a Hearst press agent, is remarkable for its errors as well as its patronizing attitude toward the Turks. The Young Turks had started a revolution in 1908 against Ottoman corruption in Turkey with no German help. They and especially Kemal Atatürk would have been interested to learn that Liman von Sanders and the Germans were solely responsible for the victory at Gallipoli, or for that matter that Turkey was in the Far East.

But it did appear in the early spring of 1916 that the Turkish and German forces were on the verge of a breakthrough, both against the British-held Suez Canal, and in Persia. Gallipoli had fallen; the Turks had besieged General Charles Townshend's British forces in Mesopotamia at Kut-El-Amara. The Germans evidently planned to use Edwards to publicize the defeat of Serbia, the re-opening of the railroad, and the resulting celebration of German-Turkish amity, as well as the possibility of victory in Persia and the Suez. As part of this scheme, the Germans sent Edwards to Constantinople by the reopened Berlin-Baghdad Railway, or *Balkanzug*, where he stayed for several months. His pass for the train stated that he did not need to be deloused, which must have pleased Edwards no end.

In an extensive and excellent article that appeared in the *Philadelphia Record* on 3 December 1916, Edwards reported that he arrived in Ottoman Turkey just about the time that Field Marshal von Mackensen also arrived there as the Kaiser's emissary.[36] In February 1916, the Kaiser had appointed Sultan Mohammad V of Turkey a Field Marshal, and delegated von Mackensen to deliver to the Sultan the Field Marshal's baton and his personal letter. A scene showing von Mackensen's visit to Constantinople, together with a view of Turkish troops, appeared in *Hearst International News Pictorial* 48, which was released on 16 June 1916.[37] Edwards was also quite active as a still photographer. He photographed von Mackensen's arrival in the Constantinople train station and was quite taken with von Mackensen.

> Edwards has a very great respect for this man von Mackensen, who is much talked about right now on account of his marvelous campaign in Rumania. The photograph which the American movie man made of the great German strategist is perhaps the most striking likeness of Mackensen that has come to this country. The picture looks like what Mackensen is – a man of indomitable pluck and courage, a fierce, swift fighter; a brilliant strategist; a doer always of the unexpected. "If von Mackensen wants to take Rumania" is Edwards'

> way of putting it, "Rumania is as good as taken".[38]

But aside from the parades, ceremony and human interest photographs in Constantinople, the Turks did not know what to do with Edwards, either. As previously mentioned, the Turks were engaged in a very successful campaign against the British in Mesopotamia, which climaxed when the Turks besieged and captured Townshend's British Army at Kut, which surrendered to the Turks on 29 April 1916. Martin Gilbert calls this victory as great a one for the Turks as Gallipoli had been, but still the Turks seemed reluctant to send Edwards to that theater.[39]

Articles that run in Sunday magazines generally are written on the light side, and this was as true in 1916 as it is now. But there was a more difficult aspect to Edwards' stay in Turkey that can clearly be read between the lines of the *Philadelphia Record* article. Edwards tells a funny story about a fake crank he developed for his newsreel camera, but it is not without significance:

> It was made very clear to [Edwards] what he might and what he might not photograph. He would have wasted a good many thousand feet of film, had not his American ingenuity come to the rescue. For a Turkish officer would say "Now turn the crank" and turning the crank of course, meant exposing the ribbon of film in his moving picture camera. So he fixed up a little device on the crank of his camera by means of which he could throw out the mechanism at will. So when the Turkish officer would order "Turn" with a menacing edge on his voice, while the object to be photographed was still four or five hundred feet beyond range, Edwards would diligently turn the handle – and that would be all.[40]

The article makes clear how difficult it must have been to photograph in Turkey. Edwards reported that most of the windows on the train were sealed upon his trip from Berlin, and a seal was placed on his camera so he could not photograph.[41] Edwards was greeted by the criminal police in Constantinople, and was told to report to police headquarters. When he arrived, they informed him that there were strict orders that no photographers were to be admitted to Turkey. The border guard who had let him into Turkey did not know what the word "kinematographer" on his pass implied. In any case, the police ordered him to leave Turkey immediately. The only thing that saved Edwards was a letter from the Turkish Ambassador. He was allowed to stay, and, according to him, given every privilege.

But the fact was that the Turks had very little militarily that they wanted photographed. Unfortunately for the Turks and Germans, in spite of Kut-El-Amara, the autumn of 1915 was the high water mark of German aspirations in the Middle East and Mesopotamia. The British, Russian and French forces soon woke up to the German buildup in Persia, and sent in extra forces to secure these areas. The German-Turkish Attack on Suez was also a failure. The Germans simply could not send enough men or materiel on the still unfinished Berlin-Baghdad Railway to launch a major campaign on the Sinai Peninsula. Partially because far too many Germans displayed the same kind of short-sighted arrogance evidenced in the *Billboard* article, Ottoman resentment of the Germans had increased to the point where Germans were often attacked, and Germans were officially advised not to travel alone in Turkey. The Shah of Persia, who had seemed on the verge of entering the war on the side of the Central Powers, lost interest. In the Caucasus, the Russians had taken Erzerum and took Trebizond on 18 April 1916, about the time Edwards left Turkey. The British in Mesopotamia, after a short lull to rebuild their forces, resumed their push on Baghdad. And perhaps most damning of all, Sheriff Hussein in Arabia, occupying the most holy cities of Mecca and Medina, revolted against Ottoman rule and came out for the British. This meant that the Ottoman Sultan, the nominal Caliph of all the Muslims, had been rejected in his own holy land.[42] There were very few triumphs in Turkey for Edwards to report. Adding to the situation was the Turkish massacre of the Armenians. While most of the killing took place in Armenia, many Armenians had been working on the railroad upon which Edwards travelled, and the Turks must have been very worried about what Edwards saw, let alone photographed. It is no wonder that the windows of Edward's train and his camera were sealed.

What he did report is short on facts; instead, he tells human interest stories. But his photography was very beautiful. He photographed the Sultan, the Sultan's harem, Turkish cavalry and artillery either on maneuvers or in battle, Turkish medical personnel performing an operation (possibly an amputation he mentioned in the *Philadelphia Record* article), as well as prominent Turkish members of the government,

Fig. 6. Edwards filming Admiral von Hipper, one of the top German naval commanders.

including the Mayor of Constantinople, the Sultan, the Turkish foreign minister, Mackensen and Talaat Bey, the Minister of the Interior.[43] Talaat Bey, whose photograph is prominent in the *Philadelphia Record* article, was a controversial figure. Edwards reported that Talaat Bey helped him get a couple of newsreel stories to Germany past Turkish censors. Edwards had made friends with him while photographing him on some of his favorite horses at his country estate, and "… when the authorities held up the films, the movie man called Taloat [sic] on the phone. The films went out on the same train with their owner."[44] Talaat Bey was a member of the Young Turk movement, and was reported to have helped British and French citizens who were trapped in Turkey after the beginning of the war and the subsequent declaration of Turkish jihad against the citizens of the Entente. Although Americans were neutral, they sometimes had difficulties with the regime, and Bey was often helpful to them as well. Nevertheless, he was later accused of having engineered the Armenian genocide by his decree on the relocation of Armenians on 30 May 1915. After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, he fled Turkey and took refuge in Germany, where he was gunned down by an Armenian in 1921.

On Edwards' return to Berlin, evidently with the newsreels that Talaat Bey had approved for release, Edwards agreed to let *Messter Woche* newsreel use them by a letter of agreement dated 20 April 1916. A selection of these war scenes probably reached the American theatres two months later. On 20 June 1916, *Hearst International News Pictorial* no. 49 showed Turkish infantry going into action in the mountains, many of the soldiers returning wounded and being cared for by Red Crescent nurses. Although his name is not mentioned in the synopsis of the newsreel, the footage was probably shot by Edwards.[45]

Edwards returned to Germany at the end of April 1916 and visited the huge prison camp in Darmstadt on 15 May. In his album, there is a photograph of General von Moltke's 18 June funeral in Berlin, but it is not certain that Edwards took it. The first time Edwards received a byline, if that is the word, in the synopses of Hearst-International News Pictorials that appeared in the trade journals, was in *Hearst International News Pictorial* No 61 (1 August 1916), which cited Nelson Edwards' film showing the training of troops at Barnstädt, a Zeppelin flying over the German capital, and the "monster" statue of von Hindenburg erected in Berlin.[46]

Filming the German Navy

After Edwards returned to Berlin from Constantinople, he worked unceasingly to secure permission to photograph the German fleet at its bases on the North Sea. He finally got permission to do so from Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg, probably not only due to Edwards's powers of persuasion but also because the Germans were elated by what they felt had been a major naval victory. The Battle of Jutland, or the *Skagerrakschlacht*, was fought between the British and German navies between 31 May and 1 June, 1916. Both sides claimed victory, although the outcome was inconclusive. The Germans still claim the battle as a victory, since the British lost more ships and twice as many sailors as the Germans. The British, while unhappy generally with the battle with the German fleet, took the position that Jutland changed nothing. They had hurt the Germans. The German navy had fought a battle which still left the British navy predominant, then retreated to its North Sea ports where it remained bottled up until the end of the war. Nevertheless the German navy was in a celebratory mood, and when Edwards arrived at Wilhelmshaven, he became the personal guest of Admiral Scheer himself for three days aboard the battleship *Friedrich der Grosse*.[47]

The Germans' good mood may explain why Admiral Franz Ritter von Hipper looked so happy when Edwards photographed him on board the battleship *Westfalen*. Admiral von Hipper had been in charge of Scouting Group I, and although his flag-

ship had been shot to bits, his ships had sunk three British battle cruisers. The Kaiser had awarded him Germany's highest military award, the "Pour le Mérite", which appears around von Hipper's throat in Edwards' film.*Hearst International News Pictorial* No. 63 (8 August 1916), some of which featured the battleship *Prinzregent Luitpold*, included "… first of a series of exclusive pictures by staff photographer Nelson E. Edwards, of the Kaiser's fleet, showing the best of the German empire's fighting ships in trim for battle, Wilhelmshaven, Germany."[48] Number 64 (11 August 1916) included "exclusive pictures by staff photographer Nelson E. Edwards, showing a day in the life a German sailor Wilhelmshaven, Germany …".[49] Number 65 (15 August 1916), the third of the naval series, featured film by Edwards showing activities on board the flagship of Admirals Scheer and von Hipper at Wilhelmshaven. Edwards got shots of Scheer and his staff.[50] On 15 July, the press section of the Admiral's staff of the German Navy even provided a pass to Edwards to travel from Berlin via Kiel to photograph the U-boat school in Eckernförde.[51] Any photography of German U-boats up to then had been strictly prohibited.

The *New York American*, Hearst's flagship newspaper, reported Edwards' comments on the experience. The statement lacks Edwards' normal exuberance and has the rather stilted sound of a thank you note, but it seems accurate enough:

> Of all my unusual experiences and adventures I am proudest of the fact that I am the only foreigner to have visited Kiel Canal and Wilhelmshaven, the great naval strongholds of the German fleets. I was at both places soon after the sea fight between the British and German fleets off the Skaggerak. There I made films of the battleships, torpedo boats and submarines. This rare privilege was granted to me for the International Film Service through the courtesy of Captain Boy-Ed, former naval attaché of the German Embassy at Washington. The German officers, from Admiral Scheer to the enlisted men, were extremely courteous and aided me to make the films for exhibition in America.[52]

Edwards later photographed battles for mountain trenches which were featured in *Hearst International News Pictorial* Nos. 77 and 78 (26/29 September 1916), probably in the Vosges, since Edwards mentioned being there in several newspaper clippings. The description in the *Moving Picture World* makes the coverage in number 78 sound both unrehearsed and graphic:

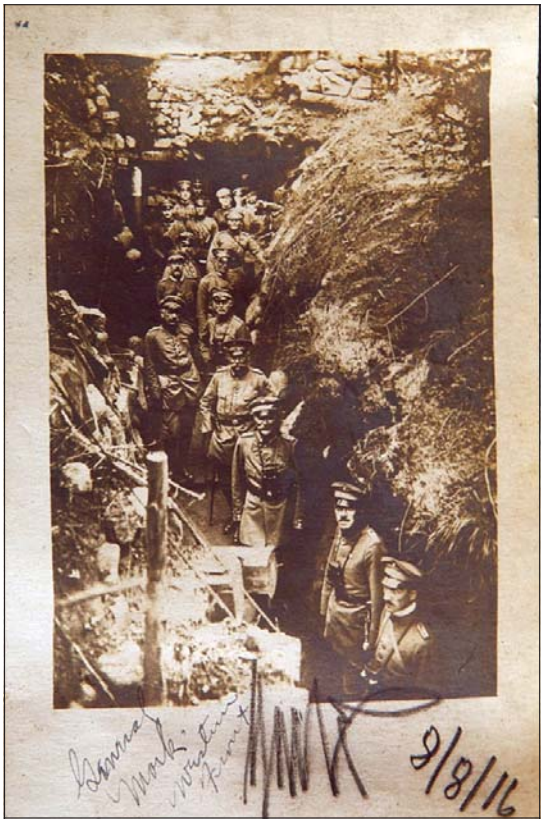


Fig. 7. Germans in the trenches, photographed by Edwards and marked August 1916.

> On the West Front. – Exclusive pictures by Nelson E. Edwards, showing the actual progress of a desperate battle for possession of mountain trenches. The camera catches the bursting shells immediately over the first line trenches and shows the men, bewildered by the incessant shell fire and crazed by the prospect of sudden and certain death, running wildly about the explosion-torn battlefield.[53]

He also photographed German soldiers being instructed in the use of hand grenades, soldiers off duty amusing themselves, and German troops entering a recently captured French village, films which appeared in Nos. 79 and 81 (3/10 October 1916). Three weeks after his arrival back in America, Edwards' last films from Europe were shown in No. 86 (27 October 1916).[54] This newsreel issue pictured women doing men's work in the German capital, French women harvesting crops in occupied territory

and General Krause meeting a fellow officer in the crowded streets of Berlin.[55]

One of the most successful films that Edwards made while he was in Europe was his coverage of the return of the submarine *Deutschland* to Germany. Earlier in the year, the Germans had sent the super-sized merchant submarine to Baltimore with an extremely valuable cargo of dyes. It had arrived on 9 or 10 July 1916 and stayed until 2 August. The trip had been a good-will mission as well as propaganda, because the *Deutschland's* successful voyage showed that Britannia did not totally rule the waves by any means. While Edwards was in Germany, on 24 August, the *Deutschland* returned from America, arriving at Bremerhaven to much fanfare there. Baltimore took a proprietary interest in the *Deutschland*, so the Baltimore *Sun* gave Edwards' coverage some fanfare as well:

> Exclusive motion pictures of the arrival at Bremen of the German super-submarine line Deutschland are contained in the Hearst International News Pictorial No. 75, just released.
>
> The latest pictures of the Deutschland were made by Nelson E. Edwards, staff photographer of the Hearst International News Pictorial in Germany. Edwards had the special permission of the German Government. His pictures show the Deutschland, decorated with German flags, ascending the river to Bremen, the crowds along the banks cheering madly. The lens of his camera also caught the welcome extended to Captain Koenig, the intrepid commander of the Deutschland, and his heroic crew as they landed.
>
> Officers in high military circles, Government officials and enthusiastic thousands hailed the submarine commander. Flowers and gifts were showered upon the sailors and they became the men of the hour in Germany.[56]

Return to America

Edwards and the German company, as well as the Navy, tried to work out an arrangement where Edwards could return to the United States on the *Deutschland*. Sadly, the German authorities turned down this idea, as the Germans were having enough trouble with the Wilson administration without the possibility of an American citizen getting killed travelling on a German submarine in wartime.[57]

Instead, Edwards sailed on the *Nieuw Amsterdam* from Rotterdam and arrived in New York on 3 October 1916. He was then assigned by I.N.S. to Philadelphia and took up residence at 1335 Vine Street. It appears that he may have found the return to the usual routine of a newsreel cameraman boring after covering the war. He displayed a growing ambition to direct the course that the newsreel was taking. Edwards shot the story of the opening of the Penn Highway that was released on 7 November 1916 in *Hearst International News Pictorial* No. 89.[58] At about the same time, he wrote a letter to R. Eugene Boyd of the I.N.S., suggesting that it cover more substantial stories for the newsreel, such as the arrival of the explorer Ernest Shackleton at New Orleans, and soldiers voting on the Mexican border. Boyd answered on 8 November 1916:

> Dear Eddie:
>
> Your letter regarding the arrival of Shackleton at New Orleans and the soldiers voting on the border, has been received, and I am glad at any time to get letters of this kind, and I don't want you to think for one minute that you are "butting in" by suggesting anything. I am always glad to get suggestions from any of the operators, and welcome them. Shackleton's arrival was covered by a local man and we have the film in the office, and Brown is taking care of the voting on the border. While we had this stuff covered, I am still glad to see that you are taking enough interest in things to make little suggestions of this kind. I saw reel #89 yesterday, which had your picture of the dedication of the Penn Highway. This was a nice piece of film – very clear, and I think it was covered in a good way. A subject of this kind is not very interesting, but the way you took it made it so. Keep up the good work.
>
> Very truly yours,
> /s/ R. Eugene Boyd

If Edwards was suffering from restlessness, international events soon found a cure. In April of 1917, the United States declared war against Germany and Austria. Even in that pre-Vietnam era, when young men went to war without much soul-searching, the response of the Edwards family can only be called remarkable.

All five of the Edwards sons joined the army. It is unclear why Nelson Edwards did not get a com-

mission as a photographer in the Signal Corps, because there are documents in the family papers suggesting that there was already a slot waiting for him as cinematographer in the Signal Corps. Instead, Edwards enlisted. He was in the U. S. military from 7 December 1917 with the 152nd Depot Brigade at Camp Upton, Yapahank, Long Island, New York. Until 21 January 1919 he was a sergeant in Headquarters Company of the 4th Battalion. He kept his hand in as photographer, and took the pictures that illustrated a long article that appeared in the *New York Tribune* in August, 1917 on the officer candidate school at Plattsburg, New York.[59] All the other Edwards Brothers saw active duty in France or in the United States.

Hobart D. Edwards was killed in the Meuse-Argonne offensive. We have mentioned briefly elsewhere the tragedy of the 35th Division in this action of September – October 1918.[60] Hobart Edwards was a corporal in the 137th Inf., 35th Division, and was one of the many who died. Of 227 men in Company E, after six days of the offensive, only seventy-six survivors responded to the roll call. Seventy percent of the men, including Hobart Edwards, had fallen.[61] When Nelson Edwards' son was born in 1920, he named him Robert Hobart Edwards.

On 14 January 1919, Hatrick wrote Edwards a letter at Camp Upton offering him his old job back with I.N.S. in New York, provided he could get his discharge. It appears that Edwards was able to do so. Edwards worked for I. N. S. for about ten months after he was released. Edwards stated that he was discharged from the army expressly to accompany the Armenian Relief Expedition. Headed by Dr. George E. White, the 250-person expedition left New York on the *Leviathan* on 17 February 1919, but Edwards missed the sailing by five hours.[62]

On being mustered out of the service, Edwards gravitated back to the New York area. He found that Cornelia Fisk had changed appreciably, as girls do between twelve and eighteen. They married in 1918 or 1919, probably in New Jersey or New York.

Pioneering in aerial photography

Edwards had always been interested in flying. He had made his first air camera pictures for Glenn Curtiss in 1911.[63] In the post-war period, he started doing a lot of aerial camera work. Edwards covered the launching on 16 May 1919 of the United States Navy's epic flight across the Atlantic Ocean by three

Fig. 8. Edwards with a detachment of U.S. Navy fliers.

NC (Navy/Curtiss seaplanes, nicknamed "Nancies") from Trepassey Bay, Newfoundland.[64] Forgotten since the Lindbergh flight of 1927, the 1919 navy transatlantic flight was a big story, and Edwards spent some time in Newfoundland photographing the big flying boats. Some of the footage survives. In 1945, *Universal News* compiled one of those "history of flight" stories that incorporated footage of the 1919 transatlantic flight which still exists in the Universal Newsreel collection at the National Archives. Since after January, 1919, Universal released International Newsreel, produced by Hearst's I.N.S., it seems likely that Universal was able to release the old International Newsreels for stock shot footage. As additional evidence, the Memphis *Commercial Appeal* ran a series of photographs of the airplanes entitled: "Scenes from International News No. 18 released by Universal Film Manufacturing Co".[65]

He photographed many American cities from the air when aerial views were still a novelty. Immediately upon leaving Trepassey Bay, he flew with the navy anti-submarine flotilla. In 1919, the navy came up with an idea to send an anti-submarine flotilla up the Mississippi, and to stop at all the major cities. It was to demonstrate to the Middle West the newly-created anti-submarine capability of the United States Navy, and also as a recruiting mission to make this landlocked part of the country more navy-minded. The flotilla included the destroyer *Isabel* (PY-10), a sub chaser, a captured U-boat, three flying boats, a band and a baseball team, and showed

No. 203
(OVER)
To Whom It May Concern:
The bearer Mr N. Edwards
is one of our accredited Field Representatives.
COVERING IMPORTANT CURRENT EVENTS FOR
FOX NEWS
Any courtesies shown him in his work will be greatly appreciated by us.
SIGNED Pell Mitchell
NEWS EDITOR

Fig. 9. Edwards's press card for Fox News, circa 1919.

motion pictures of navy life at various stops.[66] Edwards joined the flotilla on the Mississippi River at Memphis and took photographs there:

> With the ship piloted by Ensign R. W. Arthur, Edwards, perched in the machine gunners cockpit, "filmed" from the Chisca hotel to Court Square, where he was forced to stop on account of a faulty engine. The plane was compelled to land after 80 feet of film had been taken from a height of 1200 feet.[67]

Edwards resigned from I.N.S. in 1919, and then joined and helped organize the newly established Fox newsreel as the New York bureau manager. "*Fox News* came on like thunder, the product of great energy, considerable imagination and an initial investment of five million dollars."[68] The Fox news department was headed by Pell Mitchell, and the first director of the operation was Herbert Ernest Hancock. While Edwards was there, the news department of Fox's operation was located at 3 West 61st Street in New York. The first issue of Fox News premiered on 11 October 1919. Edwards was chief cameraman, and he kept up a heady pace.

He photographed a study of clouds passing over the Woolworth Building (24 October 1919); a revolver firing at bulletproof glass (31 October 1919); Lord and Lady Decies (née Helen Vivien Gould) on a visit to the United States (5 November 1919); the explosion that destroyed the Lackawanna Railroad station in Passaic, New Jersey (19 November 1919); the launching of the *USS S-16*, the largest navy submarine (23 December 1919); Alfred Hayes, Adirondacks trapper (31 December 1919); the group of Assemblymen who had been duly elected by the Socialist party but were forbidden to take their seats by the New York State Assembly, on or about 24 January 1920; Frederick William MacMonnies working on his seven-story high monument to the Battle of the Marne (5 March 1920); and James E. Fraser, sculptor, at work on the Victory medal (19 March 1920). But in 1920, being continually away from his wife began to be a strain upon his marriage, so Edwards decided to give up being a regular newsreel cameraman.[69] The last date of an Edwards story in the Fox archive is the end of March, so Edwards probably resigned from Fox as head cameraman in the spring of 1920.[70]

The Movie Man

The Edwards family moved to Baltimore in 1921, settling in to their new home at 3054 Arunah Avenue.[71] Edwards to some degree continued his relationship with I.N.S. – he still had an I.N.S. press card in 1925 and was still corresponding with them in 1926 – but by 1923, Edwards had joined forces with Milton

Stark, a photographer and film producer, to establish a photography studio in Baltimore.[72] They were first located at 903 Pennsylvania Avenue.[73] By the next year, they had moved into the more fashionable business and shopping district in Baltimore at 329 N. Charles Street. Their business card listed them as Stark and Edwards, "The Movie Men".

The film efforts of Stark and Edwards were varied. An advertisement lists the satisfied customers as the Maryland State Roads Commission, Fairfield Farms Dairy, Maryland State Game Department, the University of Maryland, the Pennsylvania Railroad, Hendler Creamery, Loew's Theatres, Maryland Farm Bureau Federation, Brager of Baltimore and Near East Relief. As mentioned above, Edwards photographed nature films for the state of Maryland. In 1927, E. Lee LeCompte, the chief of the Fish and Game Division of Maryland from 1916-1945, commissioned Edwards to make a movie about muskrats in Maryland. The LeComptes were an old and prominent family in Dorchester County on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, the peninsula east of the Chesapeake Bay, and Dorchester County has always been fond of its muskrats, large and extremely adaptable rodents which provide attractive and warm pelts. In the 1920s there were high hopes for a real muskrat farming industry there.[74] All muskrats really need is lots of fresh water or tidal marsh, which Dorchester County, on the Chesapeake Bay, provides in large quantities. Edwards, who hunted, fished and was accomplished in photographing birds and wild animals, was obviously the perfect man for the job.[75]

Stark and Edwards went out of business around 1930, and Edwards became a free-lancer, acting as a stringer for Paramount News in Baltimore.[76] Whether Edwards missed covering wars is not known. In 1927, the war in Nicaragua, which had been going on intermittently since the American occupation started in 1909, flared up again when Augusto C. Sandino started a guerilla war against the American marines and the Nicaraguan Guardia that lasted until 1933. The marines and Guardia retaliated in a nasty counter-insurgency war that included a marine air force that bombed civilians, and started to send reinforcements. While Edwards was still filming muskrats, a large syndicate in New York asked him if he would be interested in being their cameraman covering the marines in the war zone. Edwards was all ready to go when his wife became very ill and was hospitalized. Edwards cancelled his trip, and this effectively ended his last attempt at wartime film work overseas.[77]

But there was still some action. Edwards photographed the landings of the early trans-Atlantic flights, and was one of the 320 newsmen and photographers that covered Charles Lindbergh's return from Paris in 1935.[78] There was also plenty of action on Maryland's Eastern Shore, and not everything there was as uplifting as photographing muskrats. Salisbury is in the southern part of Maryland, in Wicomico County. This part of Maryland's Eastern Shore, south and east of the Choptank River, ironically called "Transchoptankia" by H.L. Mencken, was (and is) extremely conservative, rural and pro-southern, and in the 1930s old fashioned southern racism and lynch law were still alive and well there.[79]

In Salisbury on 17 October 1933, George Armwood, a black man, allegedly raped Mrs. Mary Denston, an 82-year old white woman. Armwood was said to be mentally defective. He was arrested, and for safekeeping was moved to Baltimore. For extremely unclear reasons he was returned the same night to Salisbury. A mob of 300 to 2,000 men, women and children lynched him on 18 October 1933. Later, on 28 November 1933, Governor Albert Ritchie sent the National Guard to Salisbury to arrest the ringleaders of the lynch mob, whereupon a mob of 500 white citizens attacked the National Guard, as well as the reporters and photographers who accompanied them to Salisbury.[80] Among them was Edwards, there to get newsreels of the event. John Stadler, a Baltimore *Sun* press photographer, and other eyewitnesses left a graphic description of the hellish day in Salisbury:

> After leaving a set of plates at the landing field [at Hebron Airport in Salisbury] at 11: AM, he – John Stadler and Nelson Edwards, a newsreel man, drove to Salisbury together.… They parked about two blocks from the armory and set out through the crowd of more or less subdued rioters to make their way to the building. Shouts arose on all sides. "'Here come some of those photographers! Get their cameras! Bust them up!' they were all yelling," Stadler related last night. "Edwards was shoving his way through the crowd while I locked the doors to the car, and then I hid my camera under my topcoat and put four plate holders inside my belt inside my vest and headed out for the armory. They kept pushing me from all

Fig. 10. Signal Corps cameraman Robert Hobart Edwards, son of Nelson Edwards, who was killed in World War II.

> sides and I could see Edwards' camera bobbing up and down. One of the Salisbury men, whom I know, came over to me and told me to be careful, as he couldn't tell what might happen … ."[81]

Stadler got his photographs, as well as the plates of Bob Kneische, another *Sun* reporter, back to Baltimore by plane, but it was a close call: the mob almost captured his car on the way to the airport. James P. White, one of the reporters for the *Baltimore Post*, stated that he could hear the rioters yelling "Kill the reporters!" "Kill the photographers!" "Lynch 'em!" Other reporters for the *Baltimore Post,* the *Baltimore News* and the *Washington Post*, who were staying at the Wicomico Hotel, were warned to get out because the mob was going to search the hotel room by room. They grabbed a cab out of Salisbury with the rioters throwing sticks, stones and bottles, going sixty miles an hour until they were out of Maryland and into Delaware. Others climbed on the first bus out of Salisbury, or took a convenient train to Wilmington. How Edwards managed to get clear of the mob is not known, but it could be that no rioter was particularly inclined to take him on physically. It has been pointed out that Edwards, who was "built like a refrigerator", in the words of his son-in-law, was a good man to cover the kind of event which threatened to get violent.[82]

World War II and beyond

Edwards was heartbroken when his son, Robert Edwards, was killed in World War II. Robert Hobart Edwards, a graduate of Polytechnic High School in Baltimore and the University of Maryland, evidently wanted to keep on the motion picture tradition in the family, and was trained as a combat photographer at Lowry Field, Denver, and received a commission in the Signal Corps. He was ordered to the Eighth Air Force, the celebrated unit that conducted heavy bombing raids over Europe from England, and which suffered extremely high casualties. Although his orders were not to go on missions, but to train and organize the new photographic personnel arriving in the theater, he volunteered to fly missions over Europe. On 9 September 1943, he was killed over the English Channel.[83]

Edwards told a reporter in 1944 that after World War I, his life was "by and large a pleasant and exciting round of murders and strikes, ball games and bathing beauties, dog shows and diplomats, and always celebrities". Even as a stringer, life was not dull for Edwards. He reminisced that he photographed the Duke of Windsor during one of his trips to the United States (when the duke was still Prince of Wales) and Wallis Warfield Simpson on her return to Baltimore, and he believed that he was the "only man to photograph Theodore Roosevelt in a men's room". He was a member of the White House Press Photographers Association, covered every inauguration since 1912, and photographed Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry Truman regularly. During World War II, Edwards probably got as much of the smoke of battle as he wanted when he was assigned to film some new weapons being tested at Edgewood arsenal outside of Baltimore, including the infamous white phosphorus. There was also the testing of some new flame throwers:

> At the Edgewood demonstration there was not one, but 12 flame throwers, which Edwards, in the hope of appeasing a demanding editor,

> decided to photograph, not from behind or even in front, but from above, from the top of a 70 foot water tower. This as a matter of fact seemed a sensible enough plan to all concerned until the flames, fanned by a high wind, instead of passing beneath the tower, suddenly enveloped it – and Edwards – in a cloak of oily fire.
>
> They called, as Edwards says, the "meat wagon" but by some happy circumstance it was not needed; the flames burned the skin from Edwards' left forearm, which he had thrown across his face to protect his eyes, and from the left side of his face. His clothes, which he could have better spared, were not even ignited.[84]

Half an hour later, Edwards was to photograph a demonstration of white phosphorus, a speck of which will burn all the way through a man's body. Edwards was so busy dodging a piece the size of an orange that he almost ran into another piece the size of a football, which would have taken his head off. When some 500-pound fragmentation bombs misfired, Edwards decided to call it a day and go back to Baltimore.

Nelson was not the only Edwards brother to go into the newsreel business. Evidently attracted by his example, three of his brothers went into newsreels as well. E.K. "Chuck" Edwards became a cameraman for Paramount in Denver for twenty-three years. In the 1950s he took his son into a company and specialized in films about horses. Roy Donald Edwards became a cameraman for Universal Newsreel in New York, and during the Lindbergh trial took the famous films of Bruno Hauptmann on the witness stand in New Jersey.[85] Later on he became a cameraman for *News of the Day*, a television news company, and was killed in October 1958 in a helicopter crash while filming a story. Curry Edwards also became a cameraman for Universal in Denver. David J. Wiegman, his son-in-law, became a newsreel photographer too, after Edwards helped him learn the ropes and negotiate the many problems involved in joining the union.

Fig. 11. Four Edwards brothers, all newsreel cameramen, around 1950: E.K. "Chuck", Curry, Nelson, and Roy.

Newsreel pioneer and World War I cameraman Nelson Edwards died at his home at 6 Dover Road near Reisterstown, Maryland on 17 October 1954, at the age of sixty-six. He is buried at the Arlington National Cemetery.[86] Like his brothers, his son and his son-in-law, he wrote history in motion pictures.

Acknowledgements: The authors would like to thank, as always, the Library of Congress, in particular this time the Periodicals Division; Robin Cookson of the National Archive II at College Park, Maryland for his efforts to find several needles in a haystack; the New York Public Library; the Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore, PA.; The Maryland Room of the Enoch Pratt Library in Baltimore, Maryland; William H. Fisk III of Easton, Pa.; Kia Afra for information on Hearst-Selig Newsreel papers; The Margaret Herrick Library in Los Angeles, California; and the Fox Newsreel Collection at the University of South Carolina. Although not visited specifically for this article, the hospitality of the Fox Newsreel Archive in several past visits has borne fruit. The authors would also like especially to thank Patricia Wiegman, Nelson Edwards' daughter, her husband David J. Wiegman, and their son Nelson. Nelson Edwards and the Wiegmans never threw anything away, and their boxes of photographs and records, as well as their hospitality and helpfulness have been invaluable.

Notes

Items from the Wiegman family papers are marked with an internal number, such as A59a. This refers to page numbers devised by Nelson Wiegman to guide researchers to items that they might want scanned or examined in more detail, and the authors believe it may be convenient for readers who are interested in particular items in the Wiegman papers.

1. United States Senate, 66th Congress, 1st Session, Document no. 61, *Brewing and Liquor Interests and German and Bolshevik Propaganda: Report and Hearings of the Subcommittee of the Judiciary*, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1919), 1678.
2. E.T. Baker III, "Newsreel Man for 30 Years", *The Baltimore Sun* (6 August 1944): Sunday magazine.
3. "Finds More Thrills Turning Reel Than Plowing In Kansas", *Hutchinson Kansas News* (25 July 1935): 10; *Gould's 1908 Directory* (Kansas City, Mo.: Gould Directory Co., 1908), 481.
4. In Edwards' scrapbooks there are several photographs from New Orleans dated 1908 and 1909. Wiegman family papers [A8a, 109a].
5. 'The Henry Ford Peace Expedition: List of members and other persons Connected with the Expedition", Copenhagen, January 1918. This seems to be an addendum to the "Henry Ford's Peace Expedition: Who's Who", December 1915. Both seem to be privately published by Ford for use within the peace conference. Swarthmore College Peace Collection, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.
6. *Newark City Directory* (Newark: Price and Lee Company, 1911), 1492. In 1912, Edwards is listed as manager, residing at 607 Broad Street while Floyd A. Walter is residing next door at 605. *Newark City Directory* (Newark: Price Lee and Lee Company, 1912), 624.
7. The Fisk family opened the Fisk Camera Shop in 1920 and it still survives in 2115 Birch Street, Easton, Pennsylvania. Graham's telephone conversation with William H. Fisk III, 22 August 2011; Dennis Kelly, 'Still Developing: Four Generations of Fisks Find Careers in Cameras', *The Morning Call* [Allentown, Pa.] (6 August 1995). www.fiskcamerashop.com.
8. "Finds More Thrills Turning Reel Than Plowing In Kansas", *Hutchinson Kansas News* (25 July 1935): 10; Baker, "Newsreel Man for Thirty Years". A film frame in Edwards' personal collection shows he was interested in motion pictures as early as 1910. [A91]
9. David Nasaw, *The Chief: The Life of William Randolph Hearst* (New York and Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company/Mariner Books, 2000), 234. According to Hatrick, he sent a cameraman named Louis de Lorme to photograph the inauguration. This is possible, but de Lorme, who worked for International Film Service, later was a writer for the animation department. Louis Pizzitola, *Hearst Over Hollywood* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 101.
10. David Nasaw, *The Chief: The Life of William Randolph Hearst*, 234, citing Terry Ramsaye, *A Million and One Nights: A History of the Motion Picture Through 1925* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1926), 654–661; Earl Theisen, "Story of the Newsreel", *International Photographer* (September 1933): 24; Raymond Fielding, *The American Newsreel 1911-1967* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 70–85.
11. Kevin Brownlow, *The War, the West and the Wilderness* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979), 90.
12. "Ejercito Constitucionalista", Safe Conduct 2 August 1914 for N. E. Edwards. Wiegman family papers [A36b]
13. Ariel Varges left Galveston in mid-April to cover the Vera Cruz incident, and sailed back from Tampico to the United States on the *Morro Castle*, arriving on 5 September 1914. According to his passport application, Varges intended to sail for Europe on 23 December 1914. "First Hand War News in the Examiner, Gathered by Experts at the Front", *Chicago Examiner* (25 April 1914); *Moving Picture World* (9 May 1914): 833; www.ellis island.org.; "U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1925, record for Ariel L Varges". http://search.ancestry.com. For A.E. Wallace, see "The Opening of the Panama Canal," *Bulletin of the Pan-American Union* 39 (September 1914): 363. Wallace was back in New York from Cristobal (Panama Canal Zone) on 28 August 1914.
14. Possibly the story "Canadian troops marching from camp to embark for England", *Hearst Selig News Pictorial* no. 62, 1 October 1914. *Moving Picture World* (17 October 1914): 335, but Hearst –Selig also ran stories on Canadian troops embarking for England in April and May, 1915.
15. *Motography* (6 March 1915): 374.
16. "Hundreds Gaze Sky-Ward Watching Hearst-Selig Camera Men Risk Lives", *Paste-Pot and Shears: Selig Weekly Press News* (22 March 1915): 1,3; "Daring Photographer Makes New York Gasp", *Denver Post* (14 March 1915): 1.
17. N.E. Edwards, "Photographer Writes of His Adventures in Filming Strike Scenes", Unknown newspaper, Wiegman family papers [97a, 97b]. Incidentally, cameraman Victor Miller filmed a similarly violent encounter between strikers and guards, with both sides firing guns, at Ludlow, Colorado. *Moving Picture World* (6 December 1913): 1155.
18. Kia Afra, "Seventeen Happy Days in Hollywood: Selig Polyscope's Promotional Campaign for the Movie

Special of July 1915", *Film History,* 22. 2 (2010): 199–218.

19. "Edwards Given Farewell Dinner by S. F. Friends and Co-Workers", *San Francisco Call and Post,* n. d., Wiegman family papers [A17a].

20. Wallace's visa shows that he was already in Germany in December 1914, and that he had left Germany for Rotterdam by 15 February 1915. So Hearst News Pictorial had no cameraman in Germany at least from February 1915, which could explain why Hatrick wanted to send a new one there. Department of State, Washington, D. C., Visa for A. E. Wallace, No. 43936, 11 November 1914. Private Collection; photographic scans of Wallace visa in the collection of the authors; "U. S. Passport Applications 1795-1925 record for Amel [sic] Earle Wallace"; New York Passenger Lists 1820-1957 record for Ausel [sic] E. Wallace.

21. Cooper C. Graham, "The Kaiser and the Cameraman: W. H. Durborough on the Eastern Front, 1915", *Film History* 22. 1 (2010): 22–40; Cooper C. Graham and Ron van Dopperen, "Edwin F. Weigle: Cameraman for the Chicago Tribune", *Film History* 22. 4 (2010): 389–407; Ron van Dopperen and Cooper C. Graham, "Film Flashes of the European Front: The War Diary of Albert K. Dawson, 1915-1916", *Film History* 23. 1 (2011): 20–37.

22. David Nasaw, *The Chief: The Life of William Randolph Hearst,* 246–247, citing "Memorandum for Mr. Hoover", 18 June 1920, case file 2290, record group 65, Bureau of Investigation; EH – A.F. Beach, 18 December 1915, case file 9140–4561, record group 165, Military Intelligence Division; United States Senate, 66th Congress, 1st Session, Document no. 61, *Brewing and Liquor Interests and German and Bolshevik Propaganda,: Report and Hearings of the Subcommittee of the Judiciary*, vol. 2 (Washington, D.C. Government Printing Office, 1919), 1590, 1951-1960; *New York American* (8 October 1916); Louis Pizzitola, *Hearst Over Hollywood,* 142. The Congressional hearings mention a message from the German ambassador to the Berlin foreign office, dated 27 December 1915, which Captain G. R. Lester of the Army Intelligence Service said he could not completely connect up with German plans. It was read into the record as follows:

> "With reference to Decree A. N. 56 promised Hearst and *Chicago Tribune* facilities. Weigly [Edwin F. Weigle] probably already Germany. Hearst photographer Nelsons left on Ford Peace Ship. Please instruct legation Hague facilities Edward's journey Germany", *Brewing and Liquor Interests and German and Bolshevik Propaganda*, Vol. 2, 1678. Von Bernstorff, Baron Zwiedenek, Austrian Chargé d'Affaires and members of the Austrian Embassy staff were photographed by Hearst-Vitagraph in February 1916. *Hearst-Vitagraph News Pictorial* No. 7, 28 January 1916. *Moving Picture World* (12 February 1916): 1010.

23. Wiegman family papers [A34b].

24. Pass signed by von Bernstorff, Kaiserlich Deutsche Botschaft, J. Nr. A 6987, 4 November 1915. Wiegman Family papers [A26].

25. From an unidentiofied newspaper, probably from Newark or Arlington, New Jersey. Wiegman Family Papers [A59].

26. E.P. Hatrick to Louis P. Lochner, 1 December 1915. Wiegman Family papers [37b]

27. "Joseph T. Rucker", *Moving Picture World* (18 December 1915): 2194; "Universal Peace Cameraman Back", *Moving Picture World* (26 February 1916): 1273.

28. Unidentified photography magazine, Wiegman family papers [A34b].

29. Francis A. Collins, *The Camera Man* (New York: The Century Co., 1919), 87–88, 109. Mitchell was to be a future boss of Edwards at Fox Newsreels. See Fielding, *The American Newsreel 1911-1967* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), infra.

30. *The Argosy* (8 December 1915). Swarthmore College Peace Collection. Mary Fels, wife of Joseph Fels, was a prominent social reformer. Her husband was very important in the Single Tax movement, and she later became an ardent Zionist. The family was from Philadelphia.

31. The German authorities imposed on the delegation a complete ban against carrying letters, opera glasses, photographs, post cards, and cameras across Germany. Louis P. Lochner, *America's Don Quixote: Henry Ford's Attempt to save Europe* (London: Kegan Paul Trench, Ltd., 1924), 104.

32. Shortly after arriving in Europe, while on board the ship, Edwards received a telegram from Hatrick (addressed to "Edwards Heast") offering to meet him in Europe, depending on Ford's plans. Telegram from Hatrick to Edwards, 23 December 1915, Wiegman family papers [A49a]

33. *New York American* (2 January 1916); *Moving Picture World* (15 January 1916). The leapfrog and other footage, some of which matches the description from the 8 December photo op described supra was also featured in *Universal Animated Weekly* No. 200, released 5 January 1916, no doubt shot by Rucker. According to Francis A. Collins, Lawrence J. Darmour also photographed the leap frog for Mutual, but the only Darmour footage of the Ford Peace Ship so far documented is *Mutual Weekly* No. 55, 20 January 1916. *Moving Picture World* (8 Jan 1916): 290; *Moving Picture World* (8 January 1916): 219; *Moving Picture World* (22 January 1916): 663; *Moving Picture World* (5 February 1916). Darmour returned to the United States along with Berndt G. Phillips on board the

Kristianafjord on 24 January 1916, along with others of the Ford Peace Party. New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1957: record for Laurence [sic] J. Darmour. http://search.ancestry.com.; Francis A. Collins, *The Camera Man*, 109; "Ford Peace Party Had Lively Trip", *Philadelphia Enquirer* (25 January 1916): 2.

34. Baker, "Newsreel Man for 30 Years."

35. J. Rickard, *August von Mackensen, 1849-1945, German Field Marshal* http://www.historyofwar.org/articles/people_mackensen_august.html (7 November 2007); Martin Gilbert, *The First World War: A Complete History* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1994), 206.

36. "The Turk and the Teuton", *Philadelphia Record* (3 December 1916): Magazine Section, 1.

37. *Moving Picture World* (1 July 1916): 107; "History – Making Events in International News Pictorial", *New York American* (30 June 1916): 12. The *New York American* advertisement included a frame enlargement from the newsreel which appears show the side entrance to the Hamidiye Mosque in Constantinople, very similar to one of the photographs in Edwards' photograph albums (76a&b). The Sultan was probably attending the Sultan's *selamlik*, the ceremonial on the occasion of the visit of the Sultan to one of his mosques for the Friday service. M. T. Houtsma, *First Encyclopedia of Islam, 1913-1936* (E.J. Brill and Luzak, 1938), 95.

38. "The Turk and the Teuton".

39. Martin Gilbert, *The First World War*, 244.

40. "The Turk and the Teuton". See also undated newspaper clipping with caption "Edwards invention" in Wiegman family papers [A22].

41. "The Turk and the Teuton".

42. Sean McMeekin, *The Berlin Baghdad Express: The Ottoman Empire and Germany's Bid for World Power* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010), 275–317.

43. "The Turk and the Teuton".

44. Ibid. *Moving Picture World* mentioned that Edwards photographed the Sultan, but gave the date as November 1915, which was several months before Edwards left the United States. "The German Fleet in the North Sea", *Moving Picture World* (19 August 1916): 1268.

45. Edwards-Messter agreement in Wiegman family papers [A57a]. Review, *Hearst International News Pictorial* 48 in *Moving Picture World* (8 July 1916): 309.

46. Actually, the Darmstadt story ran in the 28 July 1916 issue, and the Von Hindenburg statue story, with a dedication of the statue with Chancellor von Bethmann-Hollweg, as well as a report on the food situation in Berlin, ran on 2 August. "All over the World with Hearst International Film Pictorial", *New York American* (28 July 1916): 7. 'Biggest World Events in Hearst International Film Pictorial', *New York American* (2 August 1916): 5. There is a further question regarding the von Hindenburg statue film. According to Anna von der Goltz, the dedication of the "monster statue" with Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg, which appears in the illustration in the *New York American*, was held on 4 September 1915, before Edwards got to Germany. Of course, Edwards could have gotten hold of a copy of the footage and sent it to I.N.S. See Anna von der Goltz, *Power, Myth and the Rise of the Nazis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 31.

47. "The German Fleet in the North Sea", *Moving Picture World* (19 August 1916): 1268.

48. *Motography* (26 August 1916): 519.

49. Ibid. This issue included shots of the *Prinzregent Luitpold* in the North Sea, taken by Edwards on 16 June. "Great World Events in Hearst International Film Pictorial", *New York American* (9 August 1916): 5.

50. "Girdling the Globe in Hearst International Film Pictorial", *New York American* (15 August 1916): 5. See also *Moving Picture World* (2 September 1916): 1557.

51. Bescheinigung, Presseabteilung des Admiralstabes der Marine, 15 July 1916. Wiegman family papers, A20. There is no evidence that newsreels or motion pictures of the submarine *school were ever released*.

52. "Tells How he Got Films in Shrapnel Rain", *New York American* (c. 4 October 1916): 6. See also *Moving Picture World* (14 October 1916): 267. According to a report in the trade press, similar footage showing the German navy and the return of the *Deutschland* to Bremen was imported from Germany later that year. See *Variety* (24 November 1916): 27.

53. *Moving Picture World* (14 October 1916): 298.

54. *Motography* (14 October 1916): 898; *Motography* (28 October 1916): 1000; *Moving Picture World* (21 October 1916): 450.

55. *Moving Picture World* (11 November 1916): 915. The officer filmed by Edwards may have been the Austrian general Alfred Krauss who commanded units on the Eastern and Italian battle fronts. According to journalist Daniel Thomas Curtis, who met Edwards in Berlin, the German authorities tried to discourage him from filming women at work in the new subway because it would give the wrong impression. Daniel Thomas Curtis, *The Land of Deepening Shadow* (New York: George H. Doran Co., 1917), 230.

56. 'Deutschland Filmed', *Baltimore Sun* (29 October 1916): MS4. See also *Moving Picture World* (14 October 1916): 267. According to *Motography*, the submarine story was released in *Hearst International News Pictorial* No. 79 (3 October 1916). *Motography* (21 October 1916): 952.

57. Baker, 'Newsreel Man for 30 Years'.

58. *Motography* (25 November 1916): 1209.
59. "Three Months of Plattsburg Justifies America's Military Experiment," *New York Tribune* (12 August 1917): 8.
60. Graham and van Dopperen, "Edwin F. Weigle: Cameraman for the Chicago Tribune": 400–401; Robert H. Ferrell, *Collapse at Meuse-Argonne: the Failure of the Missouri-Kansas Division* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri, 2004).
61. *Reno's Response: History of Reno County's War Work Activities during the World War, 1917–1918* (Hutchinson, Kansas: Hutchinson Office Supply and Printing Company, 1920), 38, 44, 139–140, 187.
62. "Movie Operator Here in Extensive Trips; Photographed Kaiser", *Commercial Appeal* (8 June 1919): 17; "Near East Relief Expedition Leaves", *New York Times* (17 February 1919): 6.
63. "Movie Operator Here in Extensive Trips".
64. Ibid. "Hundreds Inspect Anti-Sub Flotilla", *Commercial Appeal* (6 June 1919): 8.
65. *Commercial Appeal* (4 May 1919): 1; see also *Polar Flight* (1926) and *Transatlantic Flight* (1919): National Archives, ARC Identifier 89108. The Archives specifically lists the contributor of the 1919 material as the International Newsreel Corporation, 1919. See also Fielding, *The American Newsreel 1911–1967*, 88, 106. Very few of the early Hearst News Pictorials survive. One of the saddest things in Louis Pizzitola's book on Hearst is the description of the fate of most of them: "Once they were screened, news films were essentially up for grabs at the International Film Service Office. Morrill Goddard's son Dewitt remembers his father, who was treasurer of IFS at the time, bringing footage home to their apartment on Riverside Drive, where the youngster spliced out the fashion sequences but left in the war-related scenes to entertain his friend on a miniature motion-picture projector". Louis Pizzitola, *Hearst over Hollywood*, 170.
66. *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships* (Washington, D. C.: Navy Department, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Naval History Division, 1968, reprint 1977), Vol. III, 463.
67. "Movie Operator Here in Extensive Trips".
68. Raymond Fielding, *The American Newsreel 1911–1967*, 60.
69. "Finds More Thrills Turning Reel Than Plowing in Kansas", *Hutchinson Kansas News* (25 July 1935): 10.
70. Fox News: MVTN 5207: NYC Clouds; MVTN A-461: Bulletproof Glass; MVTN 2455: Lord and Lady Decies; MVTN 1923: Railroad Station Wrecked by Explosion; MVTN-A – 1621: Launching of the USS "S-16" (SS-121); MVTN 392: Adirondacks Trapper; MVTN 1890: New York State Assembly; MVTN 1518: Monument to Battle of the Marne; MTVN 293: James E. Fraser, Sculptor. Fox News Collection, Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina, http://libcat.csd.sc.edu; 'Special Fox News Bulletin no. 46: Important Corrections of Changes in Staff Given in Bulletin No. 44', Wiegman Family papers [A29].
71. *Baltimore City Directory, 1921* (Baltimore: R. L. Polk & Co., 1921), 755.
72. *Educational Screen*, Vol. 19, 1940, 236.
73. *Baltimore City Directory, 1923*.
74. "Muskrat Movie Reel Ready for Premiere in State Game Dept", *The Baltimore Daily* – ? n d., probably 1928. The Victor Directory gives the title of the Edwards film as *The Muskrat Industry in Maryland*. See *Victor Directory of Film Sources* (Davenport, Iowa: Victor Animatograph Corporation, December 1930). From Rick Prelinger online library in Internet Archive. See also E. Lee LeCompte, *Revised Edition of the Muskrat Industry in Maryland* (Baltimore, Maryland: Conservation Department of Maryland, Game Division in Baltimore, 1934).
75. Nelson Edwards, "Photographing Wild Birds and Animals", *Popular Mechanics* 37 (4 April 1922): 633–634.
76. *Victor Directory of Film Sources*. This catalogue lists Stark Films without Edwards.
77. "Pick Baltimorean to get Nicaragua War Photos". Unidentified Baltimore newspaper, 13 January [1928].
78. "Finds More Thrills Turning Reel Than Plowing In Kansas".
79. Cambridge, Maryland was the site in 1963 of one of most vicious race riots in the Civil Rights era.
80. Samantha Porter, 'The George Armwood lynching', http://www.mdcivilrights.org/Lynching.html.
81. "Pictures of Combat Smuggled through Mob by Photographer", *Baltimore Sun* (29 November 1933): 2. Whether Edwards was working for Paramount that day is not clear. The chief photographer for Paramount in Salisbury was Harry Tugander. When the mob threw his sound truck and equipment, worth 25,000 depression dollars into the Wicomico River, Tugander fled from Salisbury for Easton, Maryland. Paramount then sent newsreel photographer Urban Santone by air as backup from New York. Santone shot his film and, pursued by a mob looking for any photographer it could find, drove a truck lent by a friendly farmer to the nearest airport and got himself and his film out of Maryland as fast as he could. John Beecroft, "The Salisbury Riots", *The International Photographer* 6 (January 1934): 20–21, 28.
82. David J. Wiegman, interview at Easton, Maryland, 5 March 2011.

83. Ibid.

84. Baker, "Newsreel Man for 30 Years". To add insult to injury, if Edwards shot the footage for Paramount, it evidently did not even run the story. But the newsreel companies were not lacking news stories in the summer of 1944.

85. "Ace Cameramen Reunite", *Hutchinson News Herald* (4 January 1948): 1. "Hauptman Testifies, Millions Wait", *Universal Newsreel* (30 January 1935); again, this footage survives and is readily available on the internet. Most of the Universal Newsreels survive at the National Archive in College Park, and the Bruno Hauptmann testimony is available on youtube.com

86. "N.E. Edwards Funeral Set", *Baltimore Sun* (19 October 1954): 15.

Abstract: Nelson Edwards and the Newsreels: An American Life, *by Cooper C. Graham and Ron van Dopperen*

Nelson Edwards (1887–1954) was among the first newsreel cameramen in American film history. From 1914 he filmed for Hearst International News Service and covered the Mexican Revolution. In 1916 he filmed the Turkish and the German side of the World War. He was also chief cameraman for Fox Newsreel during the year of its birth, and thereafter a longtime stringer for Paramount News. The essay describes Edwards's life and work, as well as some of the background of Hearst's first attempts to get into the newsreel business, based on research in Edwards's personal documents, reports in the press and interviews with his family.

Key words: Nelson E. Edwards; Mexican Revolution; World War I documentary films; newsreels; Hearst International News Pictorial.